CAMPAIGN AGAINST
carF
RACISM & FASCISM

No 49 April/May 1999 80p

COMPULSORY RELOCATION

RECEPTION ZONES

SURVEILLANCE

DISPERSAL

STATE XENOPHOBIA AND THE ASYLUM BILL

CONTENTS No 49 April/May 1999

FEATURES

2-3 Exclusion: New Labour style
CARF reviews the welfare provisions of the new Asylum and Immigration Bill

7-10 AFTER MACPHERSON: THE RACISM DEBATE
The publication of the Macpherson report has led to the largest debate on British racism for a generation. Yet key issues are still not being addressed

Stop and search
Macpherson's recommendations don't go far enough. Legal restrictions must be placed on the police.

Will the police be made fully accountable?
Leading lawyer Louise Christian is concerned that some radical recommendations may be sidelined or diluted

The press, the police and Macpherson
CARF analyses the press' attempts to undermine Macpherson's conclusion that the police are institutionally racist

12-13 Voices without frontiers
Special report on the European Week Against Racism and extracts from CARF's new report on 'Institutionalised racism and human rights abuses in Europe'.

14-15 Mobilise for Cologne Summit
The run-up to the EU and G8 summits in Cologne in June 1999

Kurdish voices suppressed
Following the abduction of Abdullah Öcalan, the EU is instigating a new wave of repression against Europe's Kurds

NEWS

4 Still the murders continue
In reviewing police investigations into four previously unknown murders with a suspected racial motive, CARF questions whether anything has really changed

5 Racist violence update
More evidence that the police are failing to protect Asian shopkeepers in the north of England. Updates on Michael Menson and David Virgo. The police are reinvestigating the murder of Daniel Blake in 1995.

6 Campaigns round up
Deaths in custody campaigns update. Plus news on Mumia Abu Jamal and the M25 Three campaign. The Habitual Residence Test has been challenged in the European Court.

11 Deaths in custody – is officialdom listening?
The campaigning organisation Inquest finds itself vindicated by recent official reports on deaths in custody. Plus prison guards at Wormwood Scrubs could face prosecution.

ASYLUM BILL

EXCLUSION
New Labour style

A government committed to combating social exclusion is segregating asylum-seekers from mainstream society and condemning them to a life of poverty and despair

Central to the welfare provisions of the Asylum and Immigration Bill is the removal of everyone who is subject to immigration control (including taxpayers) from all mainstream benefits. This won't affect those long settled in Britain but it will affect those who have been 'sponsored' by a family member. In future, a sponsor's failure to support will be a criminal offence, and there will be no state support for sponsored immigrants, even in the direst of emergencies. The only exception will be destitute asylum-seekers, who can be provided with accommodation and support – at a price.

Compulsion and surveillance

The asylum welfare system will be run by a new Home Office agency, in a completely segregated regime featuring compulsion and surveillance. Although the Home Office says its plan is to develop 'clusters' of asylum-seekers in areas where local refugee communities already exist, the Bill expressly prohibits either location or the asylum-seeker's preference from being taken into account in allocating accommodation. Areas where there is unfilled housing will be designated 'reception zones' (local authorities are obliged under the Bill to notify the Home Office of all their empty properties), and asylum-seekers will be sent there. To ensure that they stay there (and don't have unauthorised guests), powers of entry and search of their accommodation are built in to the Bill, and the Post Office will have to notify the Home Office of any redirection of asylum-seekers' mail. If they leave their 'designated accommodation' their support is terminated.

'My lack of status is like a lack of identity'
Zairean asylum-seeker

Dispersal

The Bill adopts and builds on the ad-hoc practices of sub-subsistence level support for asylum-seekers developed by local authorities which found themselves legally responsible for asylum-seekers' support after the Tories' abolition of welfare and housing benefits for in-country and rejected asylum-seekers in 1996. Many London boroughs, faced with expensive and increasingly scarce temporary accommodation in London (where 80 percent of asylum-seekers are) began sending them to southern coastal towns and to the north. As an Asylum Rights Campaign (ARC) report, *Out of sight, out of mind* reveals, authorities soon found that a policy of dispersal resulted in a halving of those seeking accommodation from them. They offered no choice, and in at least one case reported by ARC, police escorted a distraught Kosovar family from the social services office on to the train to Hull.

An estimated 28,700 asylum-seekers are expected to be dispersed out of London by March 2001. No central strategy is being devised to ensure there is adequate legal advice and representation in the 'cluster areas', or adequate interpretation facilities, or for that matter health, counselling, social services or educational provision.

Cashless provision

Another principle is cashless provision. Benefits in kind (board and lodging, and sometimes vouchers for toiletries) were

Jess Hurd, *Socialist Worker*

3,000 people marched through London on 27 February in a protest organised by the National Assembly Against Racism against the government's Asylum and Immigration Bill

introduced post-1996 by authorities which claimed they were prevented by law from giving cash. Its inclusion in the Bill is expressly to deter 'economic migrants' from claiming asylum. Asylum-seekers who are able to stay with friends or family or who can call on the support of an established refugee community will be free to live where they like, subject to the Home Office power to attach a condition of residence at a specified address to their temporary admission to the country. But those asylum-seekers who have no such support, or whose community can provide accommodation but not the means

'With respect, you give rights to animals more than to humans'
Iranian asylum-seeker

of subsistence, will have to swallow the workhouse rules of the new regime. And all support stops when an appeal is lost, even if there is a judicial review of the decision.

Deterrence

Clearly, one rationale for the measures is deterrence, which is a European, not merely a British policy. Policy is made in Brussels, at least in broad outline, and the European policy continues to be to make life unpleasant for asylum-seekers within the confines of Geneva Convention obligations of reception. Most European countries now have an asylum reception system involving a degree of

'They stare at you as if you are from another planet'
Kosovan asylum-seeker

compulsion, or a voucher system: Britain has gone for both, for about the harshest possible option for those who need support. Thus, while not reneging on the letter of its duties towards refugees, it sends a message to middle England that Labour is tough on the 'asylum scroungers'.

State xenophobia

Perhaps the government is also frightened of the spiralling racism seen at Dover, where a combination of stretched local services, an opportunistic far-Right group and a virulently racist local press quickly stirred popular anti-refugee feeling to fever pitch after the arrival of a few hundred refugees from Slovakia and the Czech Republic and, more recently, of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo. It does not want the social costs of anti-refugee racism – the disturbance of the peace, the threat to public order of the far Right mobilisations, the electorate's disaffection. But the compulsory dispersal of asylum-seekers is not the answer to popular and far-Right anti-refugee racism. The lesson of the past thirty years, in Britain and Europe, is that you can't control racism by institutionalising it. ■

The report, *Out of sight, out of mind* is available from Asylum Rights Campaign, c/o Refugee Council, 3 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ

EDITORIAL

FIGHT STATE XENOPHOBIA

ANTI-RACISTS – BEWARE! Even as the government acknowledges that there is racism in British institutions and moves to combat racial violence, it has bowed to the xenophobic view of asylum-seekers as economic migrants out to sponge off the welfare state. The Asylum and Immigration Bill presently going through parliament is a draconian piece of legislation which, by denying asylum-seekers access to mainstream benefits, renders them non-persons in a segregated society. The same home secretary who promises action against racial violence against black Britons will, by introducing the compulsory dispersal of asylum-seekers throughout the country, render new groups vulnerable to racial attack.

When the state says that it is natural to fear foreigners, because foreigners are indeed out to defraud our welfare state, then it puts its imprimatur on xenophobia and the racists at Dover have won. In the 1960s racism was institutionalised into the apparatuses of the state via the Immigration Acts. The same phenomenon is being repeated today, although now state racism is directed not just against black Third World asylum-seekers but the 'lesser white breeds' of eastern Europe. The government can't face both ways: it can't fight institutionalised racism, on the one hand, while institutionalising xenophobia on the other. We have been here before. Never again. ■

CAMPAIGN AGAINST carf RACISM & FASCISM

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STILL THE MURDERS CONTINUE

As the newly created Race and Violence Unit, formed by Scotland Yard, promises rigorously to review 25 suspected racially-motivated murders, CARF investigates how the police and the criminal justice system are currently dealing with the murders of black people

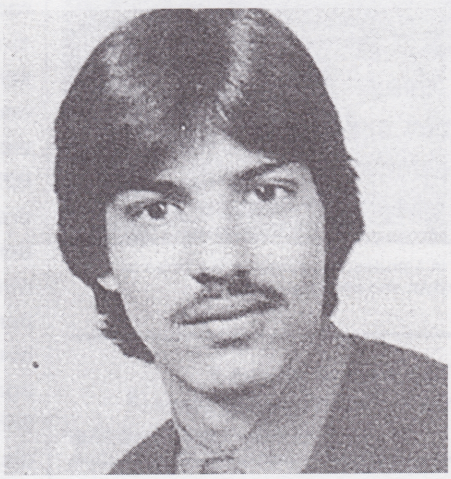
Akofa Hodasi: Police have come in for criticism for failing fully to investigate the apparent suicide of Akofa Hodasi, a young black man.

Akofa Hodasi, 24, was found hanging from a tree in a park in Frimley, Surrey on 29 April 1998. Three days earlier he had been the victim of a vicious racist attack by a gang of white youths during which his friend, Nathan Evans, was repeatedly slashed. The attackers threatened to kill the two men with the words 'You're black. I know where you live. Next time I'll shoot you.' Hodasi's family say that he had no history of mental illness or suicide attempts. He was shaken by the assault, but friends who saw him the night before his death say he showed no signs of mental distress. A police reconstruction of the death has found that it would have been difficult, though not impossible, for Hodasi to have hanged himself.

Hodasi's aunt, Tenu Smith, believes that police only followed up links between the death and the racist assault three weeks later, when she put pressure on them to investigate. She claims they initially ignored her concerns and 'joked' that she might be a drug dealer because her telephone had several extensions. The police have also denied criticism that they only investigated why several buttons were missing from Hodasi's jacket after the family had put pressure on them to do so.

In addition to the mounting evidence of police incompetence, the pathologist failed to note the bruises and swelling from the assault on Hodasi's face and his family are now pressing for a second post-mortem. Their request is being resisted by the Surrey coroner. Now, nearly a year later, the Surrey police are reviewing the case.

Surjit Singh Chhokar: Chhokar, 32, was attacked with a knife outside his girlfriend's flat on 4 December last year by three white men. His girlfriend saw the attack from her window and identified his attackers, who were arrested within a week. Controversially, only one of the men, Ronnie Coulter, 30, of Caplaw Towers, Wishaw in Lanarkshire, stood trial – for assault, not murder – and was discharged after accusing Andrew Coulter, his 17-year-old cousin, and 22-year-old David Montgomery of the attack.



Surjit Singh Chhokar

The court heard evidence that Mr Chhokar first encountered his attackers a few weeks before his death when he moved to Caplaw Towers, where they also lived. His sister told of his suspicions that Coulter and two youths had stolen a Giro cheque from his flat. Hostility arose between the four men when Mr Chhokar took his suspicions to the police. Soon afterwards he was attacked as he returned from a night shift.

No evidence has come to light so far to suggest that the murder had a racist motive, but the Strathclyde police have been criticised for not looking into this possibility during the case. Similarities with the Stephen Lawrence case have been drawn by the Chhokar Family Justice Campaign, which is pressing for the other two suspects to be brought to justice. Aamer Anwar, a spokesperson for the campaign, said that there exists in Scotland a deeply-rooted belief that racism is an English problem and a refusal to acknowledge it as a factor in violent attacks.

Moreover, the judiciary has come under scrutiny for the failure to get a conviction despite the identification and arrest of all three suspects. Both the trial judge, Lord McCluskey, and Mr Chhokar's family repeatedly asked why the other two men were not in the dock. The Lord Advocate refused to give them an answer, saying that he was autonomous, not accountable and did not have to justify his approach.

The case has led to calls for reform to the 'medieval' way Scottish judges are appointed to the bench and their lack of training and accountability.

Remi Surage: The case of an Asian man stabbed to death last year in Orpington, Kent in what Eltham Police described as a racially motivated murder, came to court in March.

Remi Surage, 56, was knifed in the back on 29 September 1998 while walking near the war memorial in Orpington shopping centre. Mr Surage, a former engineer originally from St Lucia, was taken to hospital and died later the same day. One of his alleged attackers, Paul Knight, 34 and unemployed, of Ramsgate, is also alleged to have wounded another black man in Ramsgate on the previous day.

Mr Knight maintained he was mentally unfit to plead and the case has been adjourned to allow him to undergo psychiatric assessment. The case comes to court again on 5 May. A second man, whom Mr Surage managed to describe to detectives, has not been located.

Farhan Mire: A man has been charged with the brutal killing of this Somalian student in Harrow, north London in the early morning of 23 December 1998. The police are treating the murder as racially motivated. Farhan Mire, a 32-year-old English student, was having an argument with a white woman in Gayton Road just after midnight when a white man intervened and attacked the Somalian, stamping him to death while the woman looked on.

Ryan Kelly, a 30-year-old baggage handler from Hounslow, was charged with the murder on 8 March. ■

Chhokar Family Justice Campaign, c/o Scottish Fire Brigades Union, 4th floor, 52 St Enoch Square, Glasgow

Farhan Mire Campaign, c/o SMG, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex. Tel: 0181 843 2333

RACIST VIOLENCE

POLICE FAIL ASIAN SHOPKEEPERS

The problem of racist attacks against Asian shopkeepers in the north of England has not been properly acknowledged by the police

> **'The problem is, if we make trouble, the police blame us; they don't believe that people are attacking us just because we are Asian.'**
>
> *16-year-old from Sunderland*

Every evening for the past 15 years Ramesh and Manjulaben Patel have been forced to run the gauntlet of the 20–25 racist youths who stand outside their shop in Beswick, Manchester, to taunt them and threaten them with firebombs. The shop walls have been covered with racist graffiti and bricks have been thrown through the upstairs windows, where the Patels live, so many times that they had to move the beds away from the windows to escape shards of glass before installing shatterproof glass. The ground floor is protected with metal grilles and shutters and the police have installed panic buttons in both their home and shop. But Mr Patel believes that the police don't take the threats against his family seriously enough – their response to the panic buttons is too slow to have any effect.

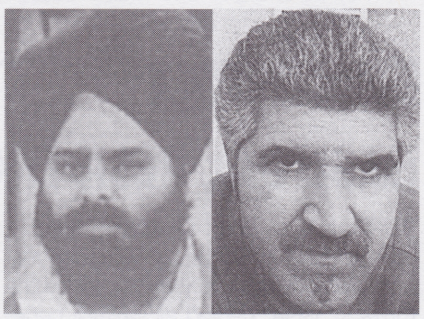
Everyday racism in Sunderland

In the north-east of England, too, it seems that Asian shopkeepers are bearing the brunt of long-standing racial harassment. In February, shopkeeper Jaspinder Dhillon was himself accused of assaulting a man with a bottle that the man had stolen from his shop in Hendon, Sunderland. During his trial Dhillon told the court that he had endured '12 miserable years' of racist attacks and abuse while running the shop. He had moved out of the flat above a few years ago after windows were repeatedly smashed by racist thugs, once almost killing his son as he slept. Even during the trial, Dhillon's shop was daubed with paint and plastered with stickers saying 'Kill the Pakis' and 'Wogs go home'. Dhillon was cleared of wounding with intent but found guilty of the lesser offence of unlawful wounding. But before sentencing, the judge called on the police to investigate the racist incidents and asked for a log of all previous racial attacks at the shop. A police survey of small shops across Sunderland carried out earlier this year found that all had been subject to attack, with incidents ranging from death threats to smashed windows.

Just one man convicted

Sunderland police are, however, claiming some success in the conviction for grievous bodily harm of 19-year-old skinhead John Monarch this January. As part of a 20-strong gang, Monarch accompanied each kick to 16-year-old Jalal Ahmed's body with foul racist abuse. Monarch received a five-year sentence for his involvement in this vicious attack, but what happened to the other nineteen? ■

NO LESSONS LEARNT



Mohan Singh Kullar, shown left, died in November 1994 defending his house and shop in Cimla, south Wales, from racist thugs. Mal Hussein, shown right, has had his Lancaster corner shop and home shot at and firebombed by local racist gangs. For the last eight years he has faced daily racist abuse.

RACIST VIOLENCE

DUDLEY MAN ATTACKED

As CARF goes to press, 19 year-old David Virgo, a trainee landscape gardener, is still seriously ill after being beaten unconscious by a racist gang in Dudley, West Midlands on 13 March. David and two black friends were attacked after a group of white youths followed them when they left a pub disco. Witnesses have said that his head was 'kicked like a football'. Police commented that 'this was a racially motivated attack, mercilessly and brutally inflicted'. Three men have since been arrested and charged with attempted murder. ■

INVESTIGATIONS

MURDER CASE RE-OPENED

The body of Daniel Blake, a young black man who died, aged 18, in mysterious circumstances three years ago, has been exhumed, the first time this has ever happened in a racial attack investigation. Daniel was found dead on a railway line in Neasden, north-west London, on 23 March 1996. Originally British Transport police arrested eight men and two women but the CPS decided not to prosecute anyone – despite evidence that there had been an argument and fight prior to Daniel's death. It looks as though the police are now investigating whether Daniel had indeed been attacked, something his family have always suspected. ■

MENSON: ARRESTS MADE

In March, officers from the Racial and Violent Crime Task Force arrested three men for involvement in the murder of Michael Menson in 1997. The men, from Edmonton, north London, 50-year-old Husseyin Abdulla, Charalambus Constantinou and Mario Pereira, both 26, were all charged with attempting to pervert the course of justice. The two younger men were also charged with Michael's murder. ■

Michael Menson Campaign
c/o SMG, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex
Tel: 0181 843 2333

M25 THREE

RENEWED HOPE FOR M25 THREE

M25 CAMPAIGN
A
ON THE ROAD TO JUSTICE

The European Commission on Human Rights has unanimously found that the appeal of the M25 Three in 1994 was unfair. The three were refused access to vital documents under a public interest immunity certificate issued by the then home secretary. These controversial certificates allow evidence to be withheld from defence lawyers and juries. The withheld documents are believed to relate to immunities from prosecution given to witnesses. The Criminal Cases Review Commission is also about to report on the case. Raphael Rowe, Michael Davis and Randolph Johnson, all of whom are black, have been imprisoned since 1990 after being convicted for a series of violent attacks in Surrey, even though police were told by eye-witnesses to look for two white men and one black. ■

USA

MUMIA MUST LIVE!

On 24 April the Mumia Abu-Jamal defence campaign will mount two massive demonstrations, in Pennsylvania and San Francisco, as part of the final push to save Mumia from judicial execution. After 13 months' silence, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that the fresh evidence and the numerous trial irregularities were not enough to overturn the conviction, and the last possibility of justice now rests with the Federal Court of Appeal and then the Supreme Court. The Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act has however narrowed the scope of complaints the Federal Courts may take up.

The US media's reporting of the case is strongly pro-execution and the campaign is finding it impossible to air the issues surrounding the case or to get publicity for its demonstrations, although campaigners have repeatedly broken local byelaws and courted arrest in their quest for coverage. ■

Write to Mumia Abu Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 East Roy Furman Highway, Waynesburg, PA 15370, USA;
Mumia Must Live! BM Haven, London, WC1N 3XX.
Web: http://www.callnet.com/home/mumia

DEATHS IN CUSTODY

MISINFORMATION, STEREOTYPING AND VIDEO HORROR

Roger Sylvester: At a public meeting on 21 March the family of Roger Sylvester called for the immediate suspension of the eight police officers involved in his death, who are currently on 'non-operational duties'. The family are also concerned at the way information was released by the Metropolitan police suggesting that Roger was a violent and aggressive black man.

Roger's family have also complained to their local MP, Bernie Grant, about the way in which the Home Office pathologist involved in the case conducted himself. Outside the inquest, Dr Freddie Patel gave an impromptu press conference, branding Roger a crack user (which he was not). The pathologist was removed from the case after a complaint was made by the family solicitor. The initial post mortem could not establish a cause of death and further tests are being carried out.

Essex police, who are carrying out the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) investigation into the death, have announced plans to use an all-black advisory panel to assist the inquiry.

The PCA is also conducting a second inquiry relating to the death of Roger Sylvester. This time it is the conduct of two Criminal Investigation Bureau officers, appointed by the Met in the week after his death, which is under scrutiny. ■

Roger Sylvester Justice Campaign, PO Box 25908, London. N18 1WU. Tel: 07931 970442.
E-mail: rsjc@hotmail.com

Christopher Alder: The five police officers involved in the death of Christopher Alder in Hull in 1998 (see *CARF* 47) may be charged after video footage was discovered which is said to show officers chatting unconcernedly as Christopher lay dying on the floor with his hands cuffed behind his back. ■

Justice for Christopher Alder Campaign, c/o Red Triangle Cafe, 160 St James Street, Burnley, BB1 1NR Tel: 01282 832 319.

Alton Manning: In March the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) announced its decision not to bring criminal charges against the officers involved in the death of Alton Manning, who died after being restrained in 1995 in Blakenhurst private prison. The CPS said there was 'no realistic prospect' of obtaining convictions, despite a unanimous unlawful killing verdict having been recorded at the inquest in January 1998. The seven officers involved in his death remain suspended while the Prison Service conducts an internal inquiry into the deaths. Alton's family are considering bringing a private prosecution against the seven officers but have in the meantime filed a writ, suing the Home Office and UK Detention Services (the private company which runs the prison). ■

Birmingham Racial Attacks Monitoring Unit (BRAMU), 339 Dudley Road, Winson Green, Birmingham, B18 4HB Tel: 0121 454 593.

David Bennett: In October 1998, 38-year-old David Bennett died after being restrained by staff at Norvic Clinic, Norwich. David, a schizophrenic, had previously complained to his sister of being racially abused at the clinic. Two MPs who have applied for adjournment debates on the death are questioning the restraint methods used. ■ see also page 11

WELFARE RIGHTS

HABITUAL RESIDENCE TEST OUTLAWED

The European Court of Justice ruled in February that the habitual residence test is unlawful. The test, introduced by the Tories in 1994, denied all welfare benefits to up to 100,000 British and European citizens who were not 'habitually resident' at the time they applied. It excluded from the welfare net those who had gone abroad to work or for a long holiday. Hardest hit were black British citizens who found themselves denied benefit after seeking work abroad or visits to family in their countries of origin. The Luxembourg court said that the test was an obstacle to free movement which was the foundation of the EC Treaty. But the government has refused to say that it will abolish the test. ■

AFTER MACPHERSON

The racism debate

The publication of the Macpherson report has led to the largest debate on British racism for a generation. In a special four-page report, CARF looks at the issues of police accountability and stop and search powers which are still not being addressed, and reports on the negative reaction to the Macpherson report in sections of the press.

Stop and search: strong words but limited action

The report of the Lawrence inquiry singles out countrywide racial disparities in the use of stop-and-search as one of the key areas of 'institutional racism' in the police. In doing so, the report does no more than to confirm what has long been widely known in the black community.

The Macpherson report goes on to condemn strongly those who seek to justify the disproportionate numbers of black people who are stopped and searched on seemingly non-racial grounds, saying that such attempts 'simply exacerbate the climate of distrust' that this area of police practice generates in the black community.

Yet in its recommendations the Macpherson report specifically rejects removing or limiting police powers of stop-and-search (which have recently been extended), on the grounds of their 'genuine usefulness in the prevention and detection of crime'.

Instead, it recommends that the current provisions for recording stops and searches (under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act) should be extended to all stops (including so-called 'voluntary' ones) and that it should be compulsory for the police to give all persons stopped a written record of the reasons. Currently, reasons need only be given on arrest. Police forces should be required to publicise these new requirements, the report adds, and to monitor the use of stop-and-search, including by individual officers.

Managing stop and search

Will such measures do anything to curb the police abuse of stop-and-search? Already the law provides that failure by the police to make a record of a stop does not render it unlawful or prevent the use of evidence gained against the suspect. It is unlikely that the mere threat of disciplinary proceedings will be sufficient to stop the police continuing to use unrecorded stops and searches to harass black people.

Inefficient policing

Twenty or thirty years ago, 'word-of-mouth' job recruitment was widespread in Britain. No doubt such practices were ▶

The press, the police & Macpherson

Sections of the press have tried to undermine Macpherson's conclusion that the police are institutionally racist. Anti-racists have been charged with being politically correct, anti-English and giving the police a confidence problem.

In *CARF* 48 we analysed the limits of the new agenda of middle England on race, as exemplified by the *Daily Mail* in its championing of the Lawrence case. The *Daily Mail* made the murder of Stephen Lawrence a *cause célèbre* while also campaigning viciously against asylum-seekers. In this way middle England was proving that it could care for a black victim of crime while still preserving most of its old prejudices. But the biggest concern of the *Mail*, the *Telegraph* and the other opinion-leaders for middle England, has been to reject the idea of institutional racism. When news leaked that Macpherson would accuse the police of institutional racism, the *Mail* felt that the Inquiry had gone too far. A barrage of columns and editorials in the week following the report's publication sought to break the link established by Macpherson between the Lawrence case and the concept of institutional racism.

This concept was repeatedly taken to mean that every police officer must be a racist, thereby refusing to take seriously the distinction between individual and institutional racism.

The refusal to accept 'institutional racism'

According to the *Mail* editorial for 24 February, the words 'institutional racism' could 'hardly be more chilling...they must damn every member of the Force...It is precisely the kind of prejudiced blanket condemnation in which genuine racists like to indulge...' Elsewhere, Lynda Lee-Potter wrote that institutional racism is 'an inept, woolly ▶

STOP AND SEARCH continued

seen as an economical way to carry out recruitment, but because of the racially divided society in which they operated, they almost inevitably resulted in racial discrimination. Today such recruitment is widely acknowledged not just as inherently racist, but also as ineffective, in that it does not result in choosing the best available candidate for any job.

Stop-and-search is similarly seen as a convenient method of policing, especially in inner city and black areas. But given the nature of the police as an institution and the society in which it operates, stop-and-search is bound to operate in a racially discriminatory manner.

Nor is it a very effective way of policing. We know that the vast majority of people stopped are found to be innocent of any crime, with only 12% of stops of black people (and 3% of whites) resulting in arrests. Overall, stop-and-search accounts for only 11% of arrests nationally. We also know from Home Office research that black people arrested following a stop-and-search are less likely to be charged than whites.

It is not enough to manage stop-and-search better through record-keeping and monitoring. Until legal restrictions are placed on the police's use of these powers – and on any evidence gained from them – individual police officers will continue to employ what they see as a convenient way of controlling black youth. ■

Stefano Cagnoni

SOME FACTS ABOUT STOP AND SEARCH

- **Black people form over one quarter of all stops and searches in the Metropolitan police area**
- **Stops and searches have increased by 21% from 1996/97 to 1997/98**
- **Black people are now 7.5 times more likely to be stopped and searched and 4 times more likely to be arrested than white people**
- **The proportion of arrests resulting from stop and search has dropped from 17% (1986) to 10% (1997/98)**

Figures from *Statewatch*, Jan–Feb 1999

THE PRESS continued

and dangerous phrase which everyone ought to stop using'. Spelling out the *Mail*'s worries in more detail, columnist Stephen Glover feared that the government had effectively said that 'white Britons are a nation of racists...' Glover criticises Macpherson for moving 'from the dreadful circumstances of Stephen Lawrence's murder to a condemnation of all 26,000 officers of the Metropolitan Police and to a wider critique of white Britain'. Macpherson, he says, should have concentrated on 'the Metropolitan Police, and in particular the officers involved'. What the *Mail* fears is that once the concept of institutional racism is accepted, the debate would expand to look at systematic racism across society, rather than just individual cases of violent racism and rotten apples in the police.

Elsewhere, the *Telegraph* also baulked at the concept of institutional racism. It claimed that 'the idea of institutional racism makes policing unworkable'. In another article, institutional racism was rejected as unprovable. Meanwhile in Alasdair Palmer's column we were told that institutional racism 'is an ominous phrase, one that automatically damns everyone in the "institution", irrespective of their individual attitude'. And there was no shortage of columnists in other papers, such as Peter Hitchens in the *Express*, willing to repeat the same basic point – that the idea of institutional racism was 'a wild over-reaction'.

Revival for British Stalinism!

For the *Mail* and the *Telegraph* there could only be one explanation for judges and ministers backing the institutional racism argument. The real problem with British society is not racism, but political correctness, a disease which, they fear, has now infected the highest levels of the establishment.

Even before the publication of Macpherson, the *Telegraph* had argued in an editorial that political correctness is a more serious problem for the police than racism: 'This condition, unlike racism, really is "institutional"...The number of people who have actually experienced police racism is almost certainly smaller than the number who have suffered from crimes while local policemen were attending racism awareness courses.' Leo McKinstry, under the heading 'final triumph for town hall political correctness', warned that Macpherson had given a 'sub-marxist analysis of the institutions of contemporary Britain'.

As for the *Mail*, it seemed to be compulsory for anyone writing in the paper to use the phrase 'politically correct' at least three times in any article on the issue, while the paper struggled to decide whether Macpherson had drawn his inspiration from Washington or Moscow. Their main editorial on the publication of the report contended that Macpherson had made 'the politically

correct mistakes which the Americans are now trying to undo'. The next day's editorial had it that the Lawrence case 'may now be overtaken by a kind of politically correct McCarthyism...political correctness gone mad...rampant political correctness...' According to Lynda Lee-Potter, it was not the police but 'Stalinist bullies' who through 'politically correct behaviour' intimidate and frighten. Stephen Glover argued that the report was written in 'the language of Soviet Russia' (isn't that called 'Russian'?). Other columnists spoke of a 'politically correct purge' of British society while Andrew Alexander feared that 'beneath the benign face of do-gooders may lurk sinister totalitarian instincts of the sort normally associated with Stalin and Hitler'.

England – home of tolerance?

But any good story needs a hero as well as a villain. Accordingly a hero was found – the 'ordinary' people of England with their innate sense of tolerance and fairness. They were the ones who were being sold out by a dangerous establishment which was foisting a top-down anti-racism onto them when they were better off without it.

As Stephen Glover put it in the *Mail*, 'we British are not racists...the British are marked by a tolerance and moderateness that don't lie easily with racial bullying.' Similarly, Stewart Steven in the *Mail on Sunday* asked 'don't they know we're no longer a racist society?' Jumping on the same bandwagon, the *Telegraph* suggested that 'the British are much too hard on themselves...England has rightly been famous for its sense of tolerance, including on questions of race. Now that is to be put in danger.'

Meanwhile the same line was being wheeled out by columnists in the tabloids such as Tony Parsons in the *Mirror* and Michael Winner in the *News of the World*. In the *Sun* Richard Littlejohn echoed middle England's fears of political correctness with a populist rallying cry of English flag-waving. For Littlejohn, those who criticise the police simply hate all English institutions. They are part of a 'Stephen Lawrence roadshow' organising a 'McCarthyite witch-hunt spawned by Stephen's death'. Asking whether Tony Blair's attacks on racism in Britain meant that Tony Blair had 'become our first black Prime Minister', Littlejohn argued that instead of attacking racism in Britain, Blair should have said that 'the British, particularly the English, are the most tolerant race on earth'. And, for all Blair's talk of 'the people' he actually 'loathes the English...It has become clear that Blair's mission is to eradicate, denigrate or undermine every quintessentially English institution from the Metropolitan Police downwards.'

A few days later, following a piece in the *Guardian* in which Polly Toynbee criticised media racism, Littlejohn launched a renewed attack against what he saw as the new establishment: 'Toynbee represents an entire class of people who run this country from day to day.' These people have 'a hatred of all British institutions, especially the police'. They are 'enemies of the people' who are 'ashamed of [their] own nationality'. In a remarkably similar piece in the *Telegraph*, Minette Marrin had it that 'Toynbee's attitude is typical of the views of a large class of important and influential people in this country' who seem 'positively to enjoy despising the police, and British institutions generally... why is their attitude to their own British heritage so dismissive?'

The end result of this line of argument is the view that anti-racism is not needed in England; it is a foreign solution to a foreign problem. Simply to be against racism can only mean that one is against England and so loyalty to race and loyalty to nation merge into one.

Policing now 'impossible'

As well as being forced into a false choice between England and anti-racism, newspaper readers were also forced into a false notion that there is no difference between criticising police racism and criticising the police – full stop.

Law and order nutter Michael Winner was at the forefront: 'policing will grind to a halt,' he warned, if forces were to record stop and search incidents. He went on to threaten that the police, in response to 'the current over-reaction to racism', will now turn a blind eye to black crime. In the *Telegraph*, an editorial under the headline 'The lynch mob' (not the killers of Stephen Lawrence that is, but the critics of the police) offered a long defence of the police, concluding that criticisms of the police 'represent an attempt, inspired by the worst excesses of American academe, to make life intolerable for the defenders of bourgeois democracy'. Again the argument was made that officers would now think twice about arresting black suspects. Alongside these opinion pieces, the *Mail* and *Telegraph* both printed a series of sympathetic profile pieces of individual police chiefs and police stations to underline their support for the police, against the critics. So we were told by senior officers about the 'terrible effect on morale' and the 'sense of injustice ordinary officers feel'. These reports seem to have been set-pieces straight out of the Met's press office, without any original investigation. And interviews with specially selected ethnic minority recruits at Hendon police training college have been arranged to paint a rosy picture of life inside the force. Reporters were told that the interviews would only be given on the condition that they were published or screened to coincide with the publication of Macpherson's report.

Then on the day of the report's publication, the Met's spin doctors ensured that black officers were seen to be guarding the Home Office, New Scotland Yard and Downing Street. Press photographers looking for snaps of coppers to go with the day's top story were provided with a false image of a multi-racial police force. The following day white officers were returned to these posts, once the news story had passed. ■

JACK STRAW'S ACTION PLAN

Key proposals

- **Extension of the Race Relations Act to cover all police officers**
- **Re-definition of a racist incident as any incident perceived to be so by the victim or any other person**
- **Police officers to face dismissal for racist words or actions**
- **Policing performance indicators on racial equality and fairness**
- **Police training in racism awareness and valuing cultural diversity**
- **Targets for the recruitment, promotion and retention of police from ethnic minorities**
- **Freedom of information on administrative and operational areas of policing**
- **A Metropolitan Police Authority with full powers over London's police**
- **Changes to the National Curriculum so as to help prevent racism in education and value cultural diversity**

AFTER MACPHERSON

COMMENT

Will the police be made fully accountable?

Leading human rights lawyer Louise Christian looks at the implications of the Macpherson report

No-one doubts that the case of Stephen Lawrence has resulted in unprecedented public awareness of racism in institutions and in the police in particular. Even hostile commentators are no longer able simply to shrug their shoulders and talk about a few bad apples. Nevertheless the debate so far has been considerably less penetrating as to the causes and conditions of racism in the police than it was in the wake of the 1981 Brixton riots. Most campaigns have limited their demands to the resignation of Sir Paul Condon and the extension of the Race Relations Act to cover racist policing. Both are important demands but they do not carry with them any structural analysis of why racism in the police is so much worse than in society at large.

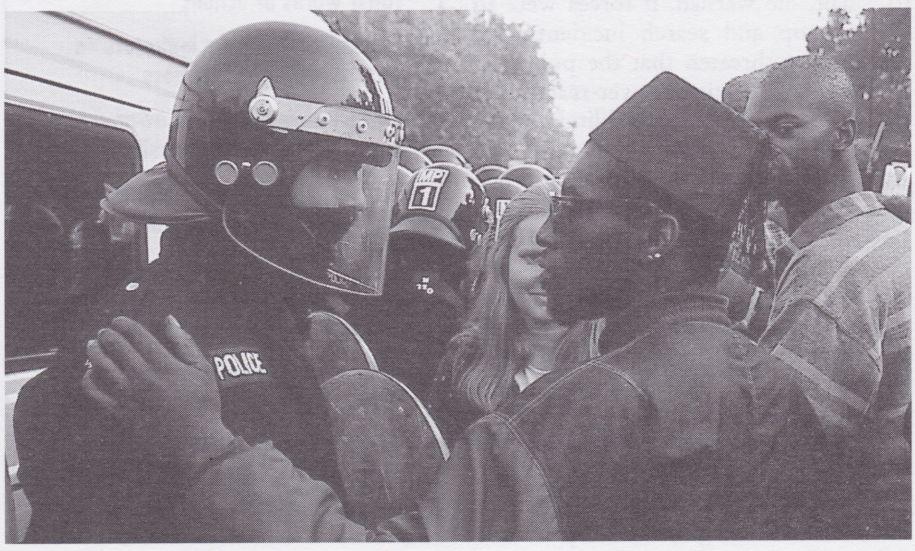
From 1982–84 the focus was on police accountability, on which prominent black people speaking out against the establishment such as the GLC Police Committee Chair, Paul Boateng, concentrated. A young Labour MP called Jack Straw introduced a private member's bill to make the Metropolitan Police accountable to a police authority. The GLC's demands for an elected police authority for London, an independent police complaints system and for the police to be made subject to the same laws and procedures as the ordinary citizen received widespread if largely hostile coverage.

Fifteen or more years later the scepticism of those who said the Scarman report recommendations would not do has been more than justified. Scarman's Police Liaison Committees were largely ineffective; the new disciplinary offence of racism was not used to bring racist officers to book and the requirement to record reasons for stop and search did not prevent an escalation of the use of this power against black people. Now the number of black people stopped and searched is greater throughout London than it was in the immediate run-up to the riots in Brixton. This has also been openly excused by a Commissioner who has claimed that most street crimes are committed by black people and has denied the existence of institutionalised racism in the police.

But though Condon should go, it would be a terrible mistake to think that this will make any real difference in the absence of organisational change. Even the extension of the Race Relations Act may make little difference in practice. My firm of solicitors and other firms have brought numerous successful damages claims against the police for abuse of power involving wrongful arrests and assaults – 'after-the-event' litigation. When London juries, realising that there was no response to such actions, started to award very large punitive damages, they were slapped down by the Court of Appeal. This undermined the deterrent effect of such awards. No doubt the same thing would happen if new legislation on race resulted in a revival of large damages awards.

The Lawrence Inquiry team actually came up with some surprisingly radical ideas for improving police accountability. Jack Straw has said that he will legislate for more freedom of information on 'administrative and operational' matters in policing. But the test for openness he proposes is more restrictive than that recommended by Macpherson. What will the new openness cover? Will it open up currently secret policies on important issues such as how to restrain people, when guns may be used or the use of informers? At present there seems little justification for the secrecy surrounding the way in which we are policed and enormous sums of our money spent, other than to protect police wrongdoing. And will police complaints reports remain secret once there is a decision not to prosecute anyone? The Lawrence Inquiry recommended that they should not. Legal aid is to be available for inquests in 'exceptional circumstances': what will these be? Why is legal aid not to be available for all inquests in which a jury is summoned, since these by definition involve matters of public concern.

And finally of course, there is the ongoing problem of the utterly discredited police complaints system. Setting up an independent system will require government money but this is a small price to pay to avoid other Lawrence cases. ■



Stefano Cagnoni

INQUEST

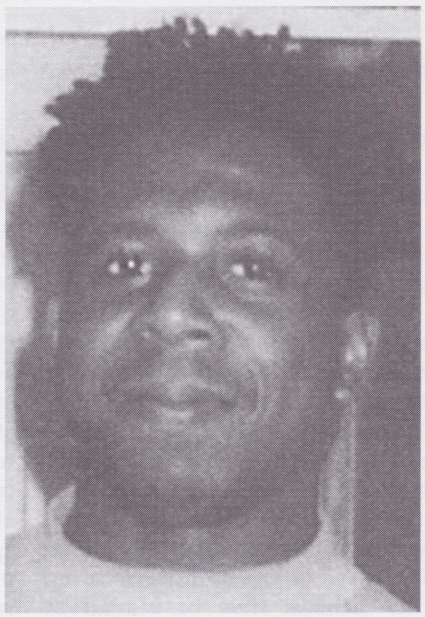
DEATHS IN CUSTODY

Is officialdom at last listening?

Since the unexplained death of Aseta Simms in Stoke Newington police station 28 years ago, community groups have been fighting to lift the secrecy surrounding deaths in custody and the unaccountability of police and prison officers. Out of the struggles of Blair Peach's widow, Celia Stubbs, to expose the way Blair died from a police attack on a Southall street in 1979, arose the organisation Inquest, which campaigns against deaths in custody and for changes in the coroners' court system. For over 17 years the organisation has helped families who want to know how and why their loved ones died, trying, at the same time, to draw public attention to the 'deadly silence' surrounding scandalous treatment in custody.

Control and restraint

For the first time, it looks as though officialdom might, at last, be reacting. The first intimation came from the Police Complaints Authority (PCA), the body which is often asked to investigate deaths in police custody. Its last two reports have picked up on the concern of Inquest and family campaigns about the way that a series of black men have died as a consequence of 'control and restraint' techniques. In 1998 the PCA warned against injuries which the new American side-handled acrylic baton could inflict. This year the PCA, referring specifically to a number of deaths (of Joy Gardner, Brian Douglas, Shiji Lapite, Wayne Douglas and Ibrahima Sey) around which the black community has organised, has warned against the use of dangerous neck holds, the handcuffing of someone lying face-down which can lead to 'positional asphyxia', anxieties about the new batons and the use of CS spray.



Kenneth Severin died after being stripped naked, handcuffed and held down on the floor at Belmarsh prison, south London, in 1995.

But the most significant development has been a report from the Parliamentary Ombudsman which criticises senior Prison Service managers for a catalogue of failings which led to the death by asphyxiation of Kenneth Severin, a mentally ill black man who died after a struggle with officers at Belmarsh prison in 1995 (see *CARF* 30). The Ombudsman found Inquest's complaints about the treatment of Severin and the failure of the Prison Service to disclose the internal inquiry report 'fully justified'. It is the first time that an official report has vindicated those points that campaigners have consistently been making: that governors were not alerted to the dangers of restraint techniques (despite their use being known to have caused previous deaths), that there was inadequate health care staffing and failure to give proper medical care to a sick man. Severin's family, and those of Alton Manning and Dennis Steven (who also died in prison in 1995 following restraint) are now to sue the Home Office and Prison Service. ■

See page 6 for the latest news on deaths in custody campaigns.

INQUEST

Two issues that Inquest had long argued for, legal aid for the families of the deceased and full disclosure of all documents to the family prior to an inquest, were taken up by Sir William Macpherson as specific recommendations in the Lawrence Inquiry report.

PRISONS

WORMWOOD SCRUBS PRISON GUARDS TO FACE PROSECUTION?

The CPS is considering prosecutions against 43 prison guards after the biggest ever criminal investigation into a prison. Officers are accused of racism, torture and brutality between January 1997 and March 1998. The investigation by the Metropolitan police began in March 1998 after complaints from black prisoners were followed by complaints from white prisoners. In total 80 prisoners and former inmates have made allegations of organised beatings, being burned with cigarettes and forced to eat paper, and racial abuse against inmates and their families. The Prison Service has suspended 15 officers, including a junior governor, on full pay. The remaining 28 remain working for the Prison Service or have retired on health grounds. The Prison Officers Association is claiming 'bandwagon jumping' by prisoners, despite more complaints being made by prisoners who claim they have been intimidated to dissuade them from pursuing their claims.

Another investigation, primarily into staff at Wormwood Scrubs but also including Wandsworth prison, by Hammersmith police, is looking at similar incidents dating back to November 1992. The investigation, ongoing for several months, is progressing very slowly. It is examining some of the most serious allegations of abuse and may well result in more files being sent to the CPS.

A decision from the CPS into the initial inquiry is expected at Easter. What remains to be seen is whether the CPS will decide to go ahead and prosecute the prison guards, or decide that there is no realistic prospect of obtaining convictions, as is so often the case in allegations of brutality involving police officers and prison guards. ■

voices w

RACISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN 1998

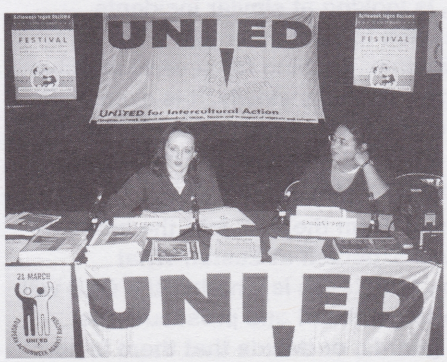
Below we print extracts from the CARF report on human rights. The full text can be found on the web at http://www.carf.demon.co.uk/deaths98/

21 MARCH was the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination marking the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa.

In the run-up to the day, European anti-racists launched their own week of international action, culminating in a 24-hour broadcast against racism by community radio stations throughout the world.

CARF and UNITED kicked off the week at a press conference in Amsterdam with the launch of two new reports:

- **DEATH BY POLICY – a list of 1,356 deaths resulting from border militarisation, asylum laws and detention policies**
- **INSTITUTIONALISED RACISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES – a special investigation into 45 deaths in Europe in 1998**



CARF and UNITED launch the week in Amsterdam

The treatment of immigrants, asylum-seekers and ethnic minorities is the benchmark by which we should judge the democratic nature of European society and, in particular, its criminal justice systems. Out of the total of 45 deaths in 1998, 29 were of asylum-seekers or undocumented workers whose deaths, we believe, arose as a direct consequence of immigration and asylum policies which deny individual human rights. Institutionalised racism played a part in many of the remaining sixteen cases. Of these 16 deaths, seven were Roma killed either by the police or in racially motivated incidents in eastern or central Europe, seven were EU citizens (five of immigrant descent) killed in racially-motivated incidents and two were EU citizens of immigrant descent killed by the police.

Institutionalised brutality

Governments are adopting a brutal approach within Europe towards asylum-seekers whose applications have been rejected – an approach which denies even their basic human rights. Immigration police seem to take the view that injuries, even death, are the price that has to be paid to effect deportations. No case demonstrates this more vividly than that of the rejected Nigerian asylum-seeker *Semira Adamu*, who suffered a heart attack brought on by a brain haemorrhage after Belgian immigration police attempted to deport her using the notorious 'pillow restraint method'. The deportation attempt was recorded on video (it is, apparently, routine practice for Belgian police to film 'difficult deportations') and subsequently broadcast on national television. Shocked viewers witnessed gendarmes laughing and cracking jokes while suffocating Adamu with a cushion.

It is a miracle that there were no more Semira Adamus in 1998. Just one month after Adamu's death, and despite the Belgian interior ministry promising a two-month moratorium on all deporta-

United for Intercultural Action writes:

UNITED
racism fascism nationalism

"From 13 till 21 March, hundreds of activities took place in more than 28 European countries. Organisations participating in the Action Week protested against racism in all its forms. Many protested especially against the creation of an 'enemy' by the media and politicians alike, the way asylum-seekers and refugees are depicted and treated around Europe. By scapegoating them, a general climate of fear of black and ethnic minorities is created.

In France, actions mainly focused on education. Anti-racist organisations co-operated with teachers' unions to create a special week in all schools. In Germany a demonstration took place on the streets of Berlin. In Denmark, the anti-racist week got the attention of the media with creative street action.

The partnership developed during the Action Week with media organisations will prove crucial to the struggle against racism in the coming years. The annual prize of the Intercultural Federation of Journalists for 'tolerance in journalism' was awarded in honour of the Action Week.

UNITED co-ordinated activities at a European level. The European Action Week is an opportunity for all anti-racist organisations to work with a wide spectrum of colleagues. It gives us the chance to create links which will strengthen our ongoing work, both inside our own countries and on a European level."

United for Intercultural Action: united@united.non.profit.nl

EUROPEAN WEEK OF ACTION AGAINST RACISM ■ EUROPEAN WEEK OF ACTION AGAINST RACISM ■

ithout frontiers

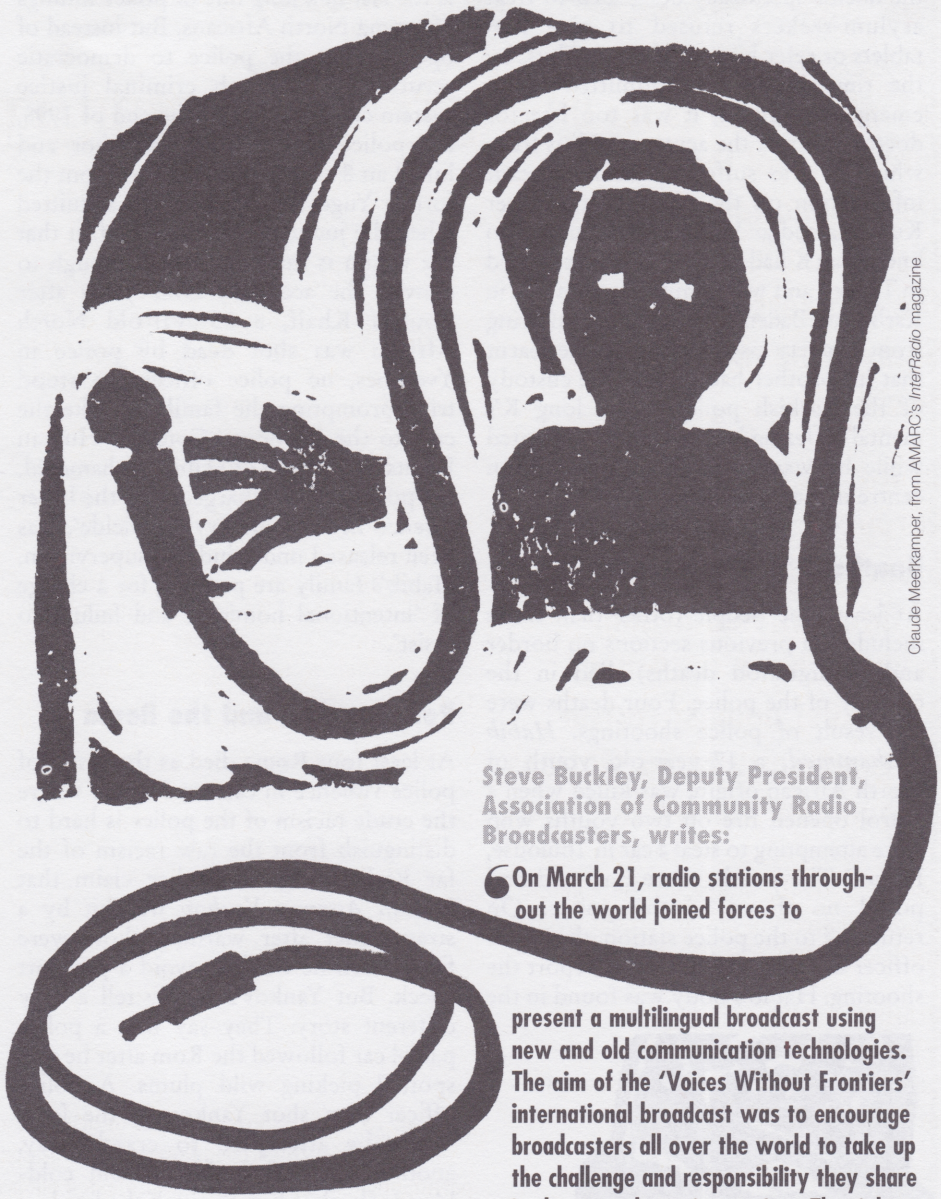
tions, an attempt to expel a 20-year-old pregnant Rwandan woman from a detention centre near Brussels ended in tragedy. Blandine K was not deported, but only because she had to be taken to hospital with severe abdominal pain. One month later she miscarried.

Death by deportation

'Death by deportation' refers to those deportees who are killed in their home countries after being sent back by governments which effectively sign their execution orders. No EU institution, no national government systematically monitors the fate of deportees. So evidence about torture, deaths and disappearances only sees the light of day when the victims' families are linked to campaigning groups within Europe. The three deaths we document in 1998 were of Kosovo Albanians deported from Germany and executed by Serbian forces. Germany's federal government, which has refused to implement a nationwide ban on deportations to Kosovo, also takes the view that it is safe to send Kurds back to Turkey. It is ironic that a country which lectures the United States for its barbaric execution of two German citizens convicted of murder is only too willing to send Kurds back to Turkey where the death penalty is practised too.

Suicides

The feeling of being trapped and hunted down accounts for the fourteen suicides recorded in 1998. Eleven of these were asylum-seekers, two undocumented workers and one an Ethiopian domestic worker who committed suicide fearing that her residence permit would not be renewed. The circumstances in which the three rejected Kurds killed themselves highlight how each saw their fate as intimately linked to that of a betrayed and hunted people. For instance, when a 24-year-old rejected Kurdish asylum-seeker killed himself in Wesel, Germany on 5 January by pouring petrol over himself and setting himself alight, he cried out 'Down with Turkey' and 'Long live free Kurdistan.'



Claude Meerkamper, from AMARC's *InterRadio* magazine

Steve Buckley, Deputy President, Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, writes:

"On March 21, radio stations throughout the world joined forces to present a multilingual broadcast using new and old communication technologies. The aim of the 'Voices Without Frontiers' international broadcast was to encourage broadcasters all over the world to take up the challenge and responsibility they share in the struggle against racism. The right to communicate remains a fundamental part of the struggle for racial justice."

AMARC on the web: http://www.amarc.org

Lack of care

There is scant information available on suicides of asylum-seekers, so we have no idea whether this is the true figure. Surely, it is not right that information on the deaths of asylum-seekers – the most vulnerable group in our society – should only be found by trawling the small print of our papers?

Such suicides raise several fundamental issues. For instance, it should be the responsibility of governments to publicise statistics on all attempted suicides of asylum-seekers as well as to monitor trends and review policies accordingly.

Institutionalised neglect

Asylum-seekers are systematically being excluded from the welfare state, cut off from social security provision and, in the case of rejected asylum-seekers with AIDS, denied access to expensive combination therapy treatments. The result is a growing underclass of the poor and the sick, swelling the ranks of the homeless.

In Germany, asylum-seekers must live in specially-designated refugee

centres. What kind of medical care is afforded them there is best illustrated by the deaths of two Turkish Kurds. *Haydar Findik* sought help for throat pain. But the doctor specifically designated to treat asylum-seekers refused to give him tablets or refer him to hospital. Thus, by the time Findik was admitted as an emergency patient, it was too late for doctors to treat the acute tonsillitis from which he was suffering. There is scant information on the death of the other Kurd, named as *'Mehmet K'*. But we do know that K had previously been tortured in Turkey and was admitted to hospital in Karlsruhe, Baden-Wurttemberg, suffering from 'anxiety psychosis' after he learnt that his brother had died in the custody of the Turkish police. How long K's mental suffering had continued untreated while he was holed up in a reception centre in Karlsruhe is unknown.

Deaths in police custody

At least nine people (other than those included in previous sections on border and immigration deaths) died in the custody of the police. Four deaths were the result of police shootings. *Habib Muhammed*, a 17-year-old youth of North African origin, was killed when a patrol opened fire on two youths who were attempting to steal a car in Toulouse, France. The youths were unarmed and posed no threat to the police. On returning to the police station, the police officer did not even bother to report the shooting. Habib's body was found in the gutter three hours later by a passer-by.

Claude Meerkamper

Muhammed's death, which led to seven days of rioting in the poor immigrant neighbourhoods of Toulouse, is the last in a long line of police killings of young North Africans. But instead of opening out the police to democratic scrutiny, the French criminal justice system closes ranks. At the end of 1998, the police officer who had shot and killed an 8-year-old Roma boy from the former Yugoslavia in 1995 was acquitted when the judge ruled that 'The fact that the victim is innocent is not enough to convict the accused'. Nine years after Youseff Khaif, a 23-year-old North African was shot dead by police in Yveslines, no police officer has stood trial, prompting the family to take the case to the European Court of Human Rights. In the case of Habib Muhammed, the police officer, charged with the lesser offence of 'involuntary homicide', has been released under judicial supervision. Habib's family are pressing for a charge of 'intentional homicide and failure to assist'.

Police racism and the Roma

At least four Roma died as the result of police violence in eastern Europe where the crude racism of the police is hard to distinguish from the raw racism of the far Right. Bulgarian police claim that *Yordan Assenov Yankov* was hit by a stray bullet after warning shots were fired when he tried to avoid a passport check. But Yankov's family tell a very different story. They say that a police patrol car followed the Rom after he was spotted picking wild plums. A police officer then shot Yankov in the foot. When he attempted to crawl away, another officer left the car and cold-bloodedly shot him through the head.

Racial violence

In 1998, racism or fascism on the streets played a part in the deaths of at least twelve people – including five in the UK. To this should be added the three far-Right inspired murders documented in France and Spain.

Anti-Roma racism is institutionalised in criminal justice systems that afford no protection to the Roma. In Bulgaria, a 15-year-old Roma boy, *Metodi Rainov*, died after being thrown out of the second floor window of an abandoned building in central Sofia. The state attorney investigating the killing of the Rom *Helena Bihariova*, beaten by east Bohemian skinheads and thrown into the river Elbe in the Czech Republic, declared that it was not a racial incident and that those who said so were guilty of 'hysteria'.

Institutionalised racism

The Macpherson report into the circumstances surrounding the death of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 comes as a clarion call for other European governments to address the institutionalised racism of their criminal justice and education systems which amounts to an abuse of human rights. Too often the victims of racist attacks are, like Stephen Lawrence, young people starting out in life; too often the assailants are young thugs schooled in racism and hatred. *David Dumont* and *Gustave Kokou*, two friends – one black one white – were gunned down in the village of Mortefontaine-en-Thalle, in Oise, by Antoine Bonnefil, an 18-year-old skinhead who didn't like blacks and was connected to the Front National. Bonnefil went berserk when he saw David Dumont, who was going out with his sister, with a black friend. Like Doreen and Neville Lawrence, Gustave Kokou's and David Dumont's families have been left devastated by these senseless murders. They, and all the other families bereaved in 1998 due to Europe's failure to protect immigrants, refugees and minority communities, demand our support. ■

FREE BRIDGET SEISAY

In March a black British woman, Bridget Jenneh Seisay, was tried in Belgium. She has been detained in Berkendael women's prison since November. On a short trip to Germany she met a woman called Martha Conteh and they decided to travel back to the UK on Eurostar. In Brussels, Martha was arrested for travelling on a false passport and Bridget for assisting her illegal entry to Belgium, although Martha Conteh denies that Bridget knew anything of her activities.

At the trial (which had no jury) the three judges seemed suspicious of Bridget's motives for visiting Germany and found it hard to believe that she could afford the original plane fare. At the end of the trial Bridget's lawyer pleaded for her acquittal as there was no case to answer, while the Chief Prosecutor asked for a three-year custodial sentence. The verdict will be delivered on 22 April. ■

Send postcards of support to Bridget Jenneh Seisay, Berkendael Women's Prison, 44 Rue Berkendael, 1060 Brussels, Belgium. London ARA PO Box 307, Middlesex, HA2 0YD. 0181 422 4849

MOBILISE FOR COLOGNE SUMMIT

In the run-up to the EU and the G8 summits in Cologne on 3–6 and 18–20 June 1999 respectively, the destructive powers of multinational corporations (MNCs) have hardly been out of the news. In early March, the US – acting on behalf of US MNCs Chiquita, Del Monte and Dole – moved to impose higher tariffs on luxury European imports, claiming that Europe is discriminating against US bananas by favouring exporters from its former colonies in the Caribbean and Africa. Another MNC in the spotlight was Monsanto. But while the press focused on the health and environmental consequences of genetically modified food for people in the rich North, Third World activists have been highlighting the control MNCs like Monsanto are gaining over the genetic make-up of the plants and seeds in the South. The issues thrown up by both Monsanto and the 'banana war' prove the need for increasing international resistance.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March–June 1999: Inter-Continental Caravan – association of social and environmental groups planning to link up with Third World grassroots movements and travel all over Europe (arrival in Amsterdam 22 May, planned to reach London on 30 May) to oppose the summits and MNCs.

Info: London Welcoming Committee, 39 Thornhill Square, London N1 1BE, e-mail: icc99uk@hotmail.com. There is also an internet discussion forum on 18 June: listproc@gn.apc.org

April–June 1999: All over Germany (especially in Bonn, Berlin and Cologne) there are many events, conferences, film shows on issues of debt, internationalism and solidarity, EU eastward expansion, development, environment, arms trade, women in the international labour market, etc.

For a detailed list: asta@uni-koeln.de, http://www.uni-koeln.de/studenten/asta/internat/eu-wwg.html

23 May – 6 June: Geld oder Leben, Bike Caravan organised in Germany, heading for the EU summit.

Info: wiwawend@mail.nadir.org

29 May: Europe-wide demonstration in Cologne, against unemployment, job insecurity, social exclusion and racism. To build for the demonstration, marches will take place across Europe, starting from Hamburg, Berlin, Prague, Basel (Switzerland) and Brussels, heading for Cologne. There will be a counter summit during the week following the demonstration and a continuous camp until the G8 protests on 18 June. Various direct action initiatives will be organised from the camp.

Info: Andy Robertson, Euromarch Liaison, Tel. 01912220299, e-mail: EUROMUK@aol.com OR e-mail marches97@ras.eu.org

12 June: Human chain around Edinburgh Castle followed by rallies and open-air concert.

Info: Jubilee 2000 Scottish coalition, 121 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4YN, Tel: 01312255722, e-mail: klrkwrldlnk@gn.apc.org

3–20 June: Cologne, alternative summits to both EU and G8 meetings. Mass demonstration against the EU Summit on 6 June, resistance camp between both summits, human chain organised by the Jubilee 2000 campaign, mass demonstration with a final rally on 19 June, events, workshops, meetings, discussions...

Info: asta@uni-koeln.de, http://www.uni-koeln.de/studenten/asta/internat/eu-wwg.html

■ ACTION ACROSS EUROPE ■

Kurdish voices suppressed

The European Union is bowing to US and Turkish interests by unleashing anti-terrorist legislation against half a million Kurds living in Europe

From the Treaty of Lausanne to the abduction by Turkish secret services of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, no people have been as systematically betrayed by the European powers as the Kurds. Outrage at Europe's refusal to hear Öcalan's claim for political asylum, and anger at claims of European collusion with Öcalan's abduction from the Greek embassy in Nairobi, led to spontaneous protest actions in about twenty European cities on 15 February.

From November 98 to mid-February 99 Öcalan wandered throughout Europe seeking political asylum. His blatantly illegal abduction and arrest by Turkey – a member of NATO – has called forth no demands for sanctions. Trade links with Turkey and fear of offending its strategic ally, the US (also Turkey's leading arms supplier), proved stronger than principle. The EU should be hanging its head in shame. Instead, its interior ministers are hitting out as hard as they can against Europe's Kurdish minority populations. On 23 February EU interior ministers met to map out a counter-terrorist offensive against Kurds suspected of membership of the PKK, agreeing to treat it as a criminal organisation, even though the PKK is formally banned in only Germany, France and Finland. Another blow came on March 22 when the Independent Television Commission in the UK, lobbied by Turkey, ordered the Kurdish satellite channel Med-TV – the world's only Kurdish language broadcaster – off the air for 21 days, arguing that it had broken broadcasting guidelines by supporting terrorist acts against Turkey and giving it three weeks to mount a case for continued broadcasting.

German offensive

Germany's counter-terrorist forces have been instructed to step up efforts to smash the PKK. In Frankfurt, police used water cannon and baton charges to disperse Kurdish protesters. In Berlin, a demonstration at the Israeli embassy – prompted by claims of Mossad involvement in Öcalan's abduction – proved even more violent. Three people were shot dead by Israeli security guards who opened fire (it is alleged that a machine gun was used) on unarmed demonstrators who attempted to break in to the embassy. No German government spokesperson condemned the executions. Instead, the embassy staff involved were granted diplomatic passes to leave Germany and evade prosecution. While killers escape scot free, chancellor Schröder has issued warnings that Kurdish militants found guilty of crimes will be deported to Turkey.

There is also evidence of collusion between German and Turkish secret services. Soon after a visit by Turkey's most senior police officer to the federal

AP/Jan Bauer

police in Cologne, a Turkish publishing house was raided by police who, it is alleged, used such excessive force that part of the building was destroyed and several people hospitalised. And arguments used by German judges to dismiss Kurdish asylum claims increasingly mirror those used by the Turkish state.

UK: PTA detentions

Thousands of ordinary Kurds reacted with spontaneous anger to Öcalan's abduction by blocking west London's Holland Park Avenue, the area around the Greek Embassy, for three days. Over 80 protesters – including old men and women – occupied the Embassy and went on hunger strike there from 15 to 18 February. Lawyer Gareth Peirce, who had negotiated with police on the demonstrators' behalf, was horrified to find that, on leaving the Embassy, the protesters were immediately detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. They were, police argued, suspected of involvement in acts of terrorism because their protest was one of many over Europe. Following legal protests, all references to the PTA were dropped in favour of charges of violent disorder. But police and Crown Prosecutors stubbornly resisted bail for the protesters, who appeared in batches before special night courts, and in one case where bail was granted demanded a stay on the accused's release pending a prosecution appeal to the Crown Court. For unexplained reasons, the obdurate objections to bail suddenly disappeared and all 80 accused were finally bailed. ■

1999 DIARY OF RACE AND RESISTANCE

RACIST ATTACKS

FEB 2 18-year-old Lee Barrett found guilty of racially aggravated harassment and sentenced to two years probation, 100 hours community service and £100 compensation to Charanjit Chatta, the Bristol chip-shop owner he victimised for four months **FEB 5** Brighton footballer Michael Bennett racially abused during pitch invasion at Swansea v Brighton match, two men charged with pitch invasion offences and one charged with threatening behaviour towards a Brighton player **FEB 8** ***Two Roma refugees, a 14-year-old and 10-year-old boy, attacked by four racist youths on train in Dover, 14-year-old in intensive care after assault where witnesses say his head was 'kicked like a football'*** **FEB 25** MoD drops court martial proceedings against five soldiers who racially attacked black soldier **MAR 16** 19-year-old David Virgo critically ill after being kicked and punched unconscious in racist attack in Blackheath, Birmingham

IMMIGRATION

FEB 1 ***Campsfield 9 detainee John Quaquah, currently involved in a civil action against Jack Straw for malicious prosecution after the collapse of riot case against him and the other Campsfield defendants, wins right to challenge deportation order*** **FEB 9** ***Proposals under new Asylum and Immigration Bill set six month deadline for dealing with asylum applications, abolish right to claim welfare benefits and introduce cashless and choiceless provision*** **FEB 17** High Court cancels deportation order for 36-year-old Mohammed Arif after judges rule that home secretary Jack Straw failed to prove that political situation in Pakistan safe enough for Mohammed to return; up to 50,000 asylum cases could be affected by decision... Home Office announces proposals to cut off all support, food and housing, for asylum-seekers who go to the High Court to challenge their treatment by the immigration authorities **FEB 19** Pilot scheme for airline liaison officers stopping suspected illegal immigrants from boarding UK-bound planes, so successful that scheme to be trebled in size **FEB 22** At second reading of Asylum and Immigration Bill Jack Straw announces plans to fingerprint all illegal entrants, immigrants without proper documents and even those refused and removed straightaway **FEB 25** European Court of Justice rules that habitual residence test for social security benefits breaches European law **FEB 27** 3,000 march to Trafalgar Square against the Asylum and Immigration Bill **MAR 11** House of Lords rules that needs of a child outweigh need to maintain an effective and consistent immigration policy, allowing grandparents of Jamaican girl to adopt her

POLICING

FEB 3 Metropolitan police officer to face charge of racially discriminatory behaviour after racially abusing black female motorist in April 1998 **FEB 7** Met police pay Brixton rappers to make recruitment video **FEB 9** ICM poll reveals that 1 in 4 people believe that most police officers are racist... Jack Straw criticises eight police forces for not employing enough black people and threatens pension cuts of up to 75% for officers found guilty of a breach of discipline **FEB 10** *Independent* reveals details of new operation, Operation Spectrum, by Racial and Violent Crime Unit aimed at racists, where tactics include using undercover Asian officers at football grounds, DNA testing on racist material, payments for information, CCTV surveillance and planting undercover officers in neo-Nazi organisations **FEB 11** Three police officers based at Withington, Manchester suspended after an Asian WPC alleges they called her a 'Paki bitch'... Scottish police chiefs consider proposals to name and shame convicted racists in local newspapers **FEB 15** ***Writ issued against home secretary Jack Straw and Met Police chief Sir Paul Condon by family of Joy Gardner for 'unlawful killing' seeks compensation for depriving Graeme Burke (Joy's son) of his mother and the psychological damage caused by her death*** **MAR 8** Research by Statewatch into stop and search reveals that black people are seven times more likely to be stopped and searched than whites

LAWRENCE INQUIRY

FEB 2 Parents of the five men accused of murdering Stephen Lawrence claim they are being 'crucified by the media' and that their sons are innocent **FEB 15** Luke Knight seeks psychological help from Greenwich hospital **FEB 24** ***Macpherson Inquiry publishes report into death of Stephen Lawrence*** **FEB 25** Police issue panic alarms and mobile phones to witnesses whose names and addresses were accidentally revealed in appendix to Inquiry report... Lawrence family plan to sue Paul Condon and Met police for gross negligence and incompetence **FEB 26** Civil rights group Liberty appeals for lawyers willing to represent the five white youths accused of killing Stephen, in case against the *Daily Mail* which named and shamed the men **MAR 5** Doreen and Neville Lawrence attend disciplinary hearing of DI Benjamin Bullock, facing seven neglect of duty charges (four other officers escaped charges by retiring); their solicitor Imran Khan is excluded from the hearing and may seek a judicial review when proceedings resume in June **MAR 8** Robert Ayling, Deputy Chief Constable of Kent, challenges findings of institutional racism in police by Macpherson Inquiry... Neil and Jamie Acourt, two of the men accused of murdering Stephen Lawrence, ask to be rehoused, fearing for their safety **MAR 9** Metropolitan police refuse to support the Acourts' bid to be rehoused **MAR 10** Condon expresses 'unease' over Lawrence Inquiry recommendations

FASCISM

MAR 5 ***Three people, including two serving soldiers arrested in raids on suspected neo-nazis with links to C18, in joint police, MI5, Special Branch and military police investigations into neo-nazi activity***

NEW RESEARCH

FEB 16 Joseph Rowntree Foundation reveals that figures for racist attacks are 20 times higher than official police figures... Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan REC reports dramatic rise in number of racial incidents reported, from 203 in 1996/97 to 407 in 1997/98, up by 100% **FEB 26** Children's Legal Centre report shows that schools with mainly white pupils fail to tackle racism, choosing to ignore it or treat it as bullying, and some teachers are openly racist **MAR 3** Kick Racism out of Football Campaign reveals that most clubs are failing to implement adequate anti-racist policies and racism in amateur leagues is getting worse **MAR 10** NUS investigation reveals that students are victim to racial and sexual discrimination in exam and assessment results, recommending a system using numbers rather than names... Ofsted report finds that many English schools are institutionally racist and allow black pupils to under-achieve.

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